

Vox artisti : His Masters' Voices

A conference by Guillaume Désanges (Fr)
assisted by Mélanie Mermod



This conference has been especially produced for the performance festival "TROUBLE" (Halles de Schaerbeek, Brussels, 2007). Working with hundreds of excerpts picked up from sound archives (artists' performances, conferences, interviews, documentaries etc.), Guillaume Désanges uses the format of the lecture to propose a personal statement about the relationship between the voice and the visual arts, by creating an artificial dialogue between "ghosts". A specific history of the voice in the art, not as a genealogy of the sound poetry or vocal performances, but rather as a captation and a transmission of a secret dialogue between artists who don't know themselves. Moreover, many have already disappeared. By editing all these bribes of speeches, one creates a forced and artificial conversation between artists, like a musical partition. What is at stake in that lecture is to stop watching and simply listening. Listening the noises of steps, breathings, laughs, and hisses, listening to the hesitations, speeches, declarations or harangues of visual artists. It could also refer to spiritualism, like a seance gathering some spirits. It is about believing in the emotional - but also cognitive and intellectual, in one word "artistical" - strength of the artist's voice itself. It is also about creating a new and unpublished statement by isolating and then connecting bribes of different speeches. Through this very subjective work of edition, the conference proposes to investigate two phenomena. First the voice as material, as texture, speculating on the fact that it can, in a synesthesia logic, give account of a visual work, as an echo of the personality, the energy, the context, even the form of an artistic practice. Second to state that the very existence of such a corpus of recorded voices tells us something about an evolution in the arts since one century. A dematerialization of the art practice that comes with a systematic speech act from the artist, the appearance of the word in substitution or as a support to the images and the talk as bodily practice.

During the lecture, the room is entirely out in the dark. The lecturer writes his comments on a computer screen that is videoprojected, while the sound excerpts are diffused in the room. The lecturer remains mute, leaving the entire sound space to the artists.

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LIST OF EXCERPTS

- Ready for art**", jingle podcasts MOMA For Kids
- Kurt Schwitters**, *Ursonate 04, Vierter Teil*, (1922-1932)
- Hugo Ball**, *Karawane*, 1916, performed by Trio Exvoco
- Philippe Soupault**, interview, 1959
- Tristan Tzara**, interview for BBC, 1959
- Richard Hülsebeck**, *Chorus Santus* (extr. de *Phantastische Gebete*, 1916, recorded. in 1967)
- Marcel Duchamp**, interview with Alain Jouffroy, 1961
- Bruce Nauman**, *Rhythmic-Stamping*, performance, 1969
- Bruce Nauman**, excerpts from *Setting a Good Corner*, 2003
- Sound Reconstitution from findsounds.com** (@vox artisti)
- Ulay et Marina Abramovic**, *Light/ dark*, performance, 1977
- Richard Hülsebeck**, *Chorus Santus* (excerpt. from *Phantastische Gebete*, 1916, enr. en 1967)
- Marina Abramovic**, *Freeing the Voice*, performance vidéo, 1976
- Jochen Gerz**, *Rufen bis zur Erschöpfung*, performance, 1972
- Absalon**, *Bruits*, video 1993
- Louise Bourgeois**, interview , 2003
- Kurt Schwitters**, *Die Sonate in Urlauten*, sound poem, 1922
- Raoul Hausmann**, *Soundrel*, sound poem, 1919
- Fillippo Tommaso Marinetti**, *La Battaglia di Adrianopoli*, sound poem, 1924
- Paul McCarthy**, *High Performance*, sound piece, 1983
- Marcel Duchamp**, interviews with Alain Jouffroy, 1961
- Lawrence Weiner**, interviews, in documentaire *Ecrit dans le cœur des objets*, 2005
- Marta Rosler**, *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, video performance, 1975
- Louise Bourgeois**, interview excerpts from *Art in the 21st Century*, 2003
- Chris Burden**, *The Atomic Alphabet*, sound piece, 1982
- Lawrence Weiner**, *Having Been Done At/Having done To, Essendo Stato Fatto A*, œuvre sonore, 1973
- Roman Opalka**, *1965/1-Infinity*, sound recording, 1965
- John Baldessari**, *I'm making art*, video performance, 1971
- Marina Abramovic**, *Art Must Be Beautiful*, video performance, 1975
- Michael Snow**, *Blues with Beer, Magazines, Table and Chairs*, chanson, 1998
- Robert Filliou**, *Imitating the Sound of Birds*, sound piece, 1979
- Ben Vautier**, *Some Ideas for Fluxus*, sound piece, 1989
- Christian Boltanski**, *Reconstitution de chansons chantées à CB entre 1944 & 1946*, (1971)
- Joseph Beuys**, *Sonne Statt Reagan*, song, 1982
- John Baldessari**, *Baldessari sings LeWitt*, video, 1972
- Sol Lewitt**, interview about *Wall Drawing #132*, podcast SFMOMA
- Jackson Pollock**, excerpts from *Jackson Pollock 51*, 1951
- Franck Stella**, excerpts from interview, *Indes Galantes*, podcast, WAC
- Pierre Soulages**, interview, creativtv, 2004
- Marcel Broodthaers**, *Entretien avec un chat*, sound piece, 1970
- Jeff Wall**, conference, Tate Modern, 2005
- Lawrence Weiner**, *Having Been Done At/Having done To, Essendo Stato Fatto A*, sound piece, 1973
- Robert Filliou**, *L'Esclave 1*, video, 1978
- Gilbert & George**, *The 10 Commandments for Gilbert & George*, video performance, 1995
- Daniel Buren**, interview, creativtv, 2000
- Laurie Anderson**, *O Superman (For Massenet)*, song, 1981
- Vito Acconci**, *Association Area*, performance, 1971
- John Cage**, *Solo for Voice 2*, sound piece, 1960
- Sylvie Vartan**, *2'35 de bonheur*, song, 1967
- Emmet Williams**, *High in the Sky*, excerpts from *Cellar Song For 5 Voices*, sound piece, 1958
- Ulay**, *Relation in Time*, performance, 1977
- Richard Long**, interview, SFMOMA artcasts, 2006
- Robert Smithson**, interview, MOMA Audio Programs (trad. française)
- Chris Burden**, soundtrack from video *Shoot*, 1971
- Robert Filliou**, *Whispered History of Art*, sound piece, 1977
- Daniel Buren**, interview, creativtv, 2000
- Jeff Koons**, about *Three Ball 50/50 Tank*, MOMA Audio Programs, 2007
- Marcel Duchamp**, interview with Alain Jouffroy, 1961
- Raymond Hains**, interview, creativtv, 2001
- Salvador Dali**, conversation with Henri Laborit, ORTF, 1970
- Marcel Duchamp**, conversation with Alain Jouffroy, 1961
- Marcel Duchamp**, *A l'infinifit*, 1912-20, read in 1967 à NY
- Philippe Soupault**, interview, 1959
- Yoko Ono**, about *Painting to Hammer a Nail In*, podcast « Art on Call » WAC
- Jonas Mekas**, conference, Hirschhorn Museum, 2006
- Nam June Paik**, about *TV Cello*, podcast « Art on Call » du Walker Art Center
- Joseph Grigely**, *Remembering is a difficult Job, but Somebody has to do It*, sound piece, 2004
- Dan Graham**, conference, Tate Modern, 2007
- Vito Acconci**, *Open Book*, video performance, 1974
- Marina Abramovic**, *Freeing the Memory*, performance, 1975
- Raoul Hausmann**, *Soundrel*, sound poem, 1919
- Joseph Beuys & Co**, Medlay on *Sonne Statt Reagan*, chanson, cop. Vox Artisti
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STILLS

SOUND EXCERPTS

***The thought is made in
the mouth***

(T. Tzara)

"As soon as you are
talking, you say something
stupid..."

Marcel Duchamp, interview with
Alain Jouffroy, 1961

***Or,
just the pleasure
to hear some voices
that we love***

"Hey, ASSHOLE: I'm talking
to you!!!"

Eric Duyckearts, excerpt de
"kant", 2000

CRIES AND WHISPERS

Schwitters, Huelsenbeck, Ball
chatter,
while
Tzara, Soupault, Duchamp,
translate
... they are the spokesmen
the *linguistic* virtine of the movement.
(the whispers session of the nebula)

"For me, dadaism was a way
to make a clean sweep of
everything. *Tabula rasa*.
I wanted to get rid of
everything... Because, I was
a poet!"

Soupault, interview, 1959

"precisely, precisely..."

Tristan Tzara, interview
for the BBC, 1959

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In the meantime, little Roman Opalka,
 learns to count
 (until infinity).
 And, at each inspiration,
 gets a little older and his face changes.
 WHITE voice, determined, neutral,
 simply measuring the running time.
 And every second
 his hair becomes whiter,
 like his canvases.
 Conclusion: Mathematics is a "Physical" science

CASE MADE

"2136352, 2136353, 2136354,
 2136355, 2136356, 2136357,
 2136358, 2136359, ..."

Roman Opalka, 1965/1-
Infinity, enregistrement
 sonore, 1965

WHAT YOU SEE IS
WHAT YOU HEAR

"I think the canvas quality
 is lost. And it's, I think,
 the best thing about the
 painting of the sixties.. "

Franck Stella, extrait d'un
 entretien à propos des
Indes Galantes, podcast,
 WAC

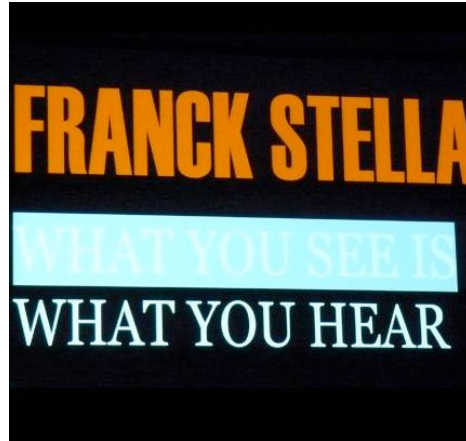
Here is a fictive history of a getting out of
 muteness for an acoustical appearance in the
 world.
 The voice, as radical ideal of dematerialization.
 Just a mouth, no need of an arm, nor a leg.
 Just: life.
 Let's imagine contemporary art as a conversation
 started in 1916 in a cabaret in Zurich and that
 became a tremendous cacophony.

" Therefore, what is going
 to disappear? What is not
 going to disappear? It's
 another question,
 naturally."

Marcel Duchamp, interview with
 Alain Jouffroy, 1961

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**Technical sheet:**

- > loudspeakers
- > DY
- > beamer 2000 lumens
- > screen 4mx3m
- > cables mini-jack / s-vidéo
- > mirror bowl

INFORMATIONS

Guillaume Désanges (born in 1971, lives in Paris). He is curator and art critic, co-founder of Work Method, a Paris based agency for artistic projects. Member of the editorial board of Trouble Magazine, he collaborates with the magazines Exit Express and Exit Book (Madrid). He coordinated the artistic projects of Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers between 2001 and 2007, and worked with Thomas Hirschhorn (the 24h Foucault project, and Musée Précaire Albinet). He developed several performed conference projects like "A history of performance in 20 minutes" (Centre Pompidou, Paris / De Appel, Amsterdam / MacVal, Paris / U-Turn, Copenhagen, etc..) or "Vox Artisti, his master's voice" (Halles de Schaerbeek, Brussels / Betonsalon, Paris). He organized the exhibitions "Pick-Up" at Public>, Paris 2004, "Untouchable, The transparency Ideal" at Villa Arson, Nice and Museo Patio Herreriano, Valladolid, in 2006-2007, "Jiri Kovanda Vs rest of the World" at gallery gb agency, Paris, De Appel (Asmterdam), Centre d'Art Santa Monica (Barcelone), in 2006-2007. In 2007-2008, he is invited curator at Centre d'Art Contemporain La Tôlerie. He also teaches at Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Clermont-Ferrand.

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